

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF
THE MUSHROOM GROWERS'
ASSOCIATION

MGA

BULLETIN

DECEMBER 1960

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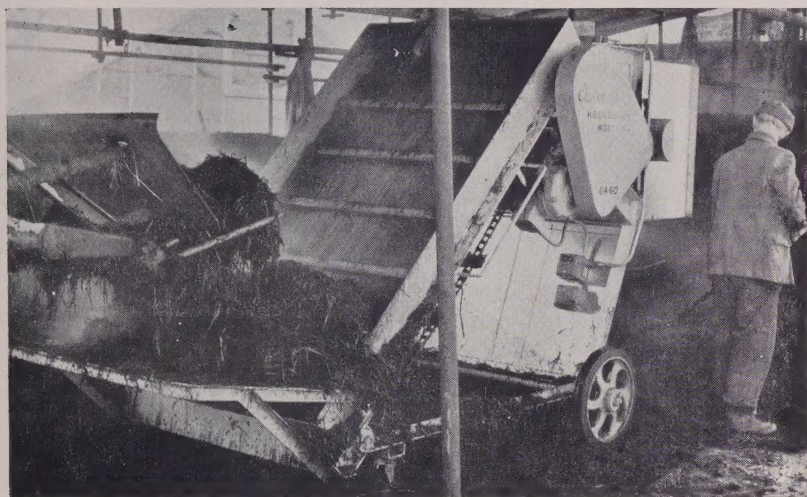
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EDITORIAL

SUBSTITUTE REQUIRED

In the course of his paper at the Weston-Super-Mare Conference Mr. Robert Patterson, B.Sc., of Northern Ireland, took what many people thought was a somewhat discerning peep into the future and spot-lighted the supply of straw as one of the problems which would have to be faced, the real problem being the finding of a substitute.

Because of the increasing demand for straw in the making of paper and other materials on the one hand and the move towards the shorter-strawed cereals on the other, there can be little doubt that the problem can, over the next decade or so, become acute. Less and less straw is likely to be produced and inevitably the price will increase, perhaps to such an extent as to make its use in mushroom growing prohibitive.

Hay made from various grass strains is already widely used in America together with corn (maize to you) and tobacco stems and these and other basics are in use in other parts of the world.

Here, in the United Kingdom, the dependence on straw is pretty absolute and, as Mr. Patterson said, it is imperative that some experiments should be started without delay with hay and other basics which, in the foreseeable future, will still be available.

It is true enough that at the present time hay is priced higher than straw but whereas there is this move towards shorter straw there is, on the other hand, every sign that more and more hay per acre is being turned out. What is more, expert opinion holds the view that the weight expansion of hay per acre could, generally speaking, be doubled and maybe trebled.

Another interesting development is the production of varieties of maize more suitable than hitherto for the climate of these islands.

Perhaps, in view of the prevailing weather, the question of gathering the hay once it has been produced jumps to the fore but this is yet

another obstacle which may have to be overcome, maybe by more and more drying plants.

However we look at it, problems arise and must be solved and ignoring them now, when say the supply of straw or stable manure is not presenting any real difficulty, could be quite disastrous. What is required without delay are practical trials with other forms of basic composting materials. Who will carry them out? WRA

FRESH FOOD PACKAGING EXHIBITION

More than 12,000 people attended the Fresh Food Packaging Exhibition at Alexandra Palace, London, (1st-4th November), and among the exhibits were some which dealt with pre-packed mushrooms. The Hartman Fibre Co. Ltd., staged a particularly attractive display.

Of particular interest was Fablothene "Airwrap" put out by Anglo-American Plastics Limited, which provides an air cushion protection for delicate and easily damaged produce like mushrooms.

The Nixon Food Vending machine which is already in use outside one Sussex mushroom farm, offering fresh pre-packed mushrooms to passers-by, also attracted considerable interest.

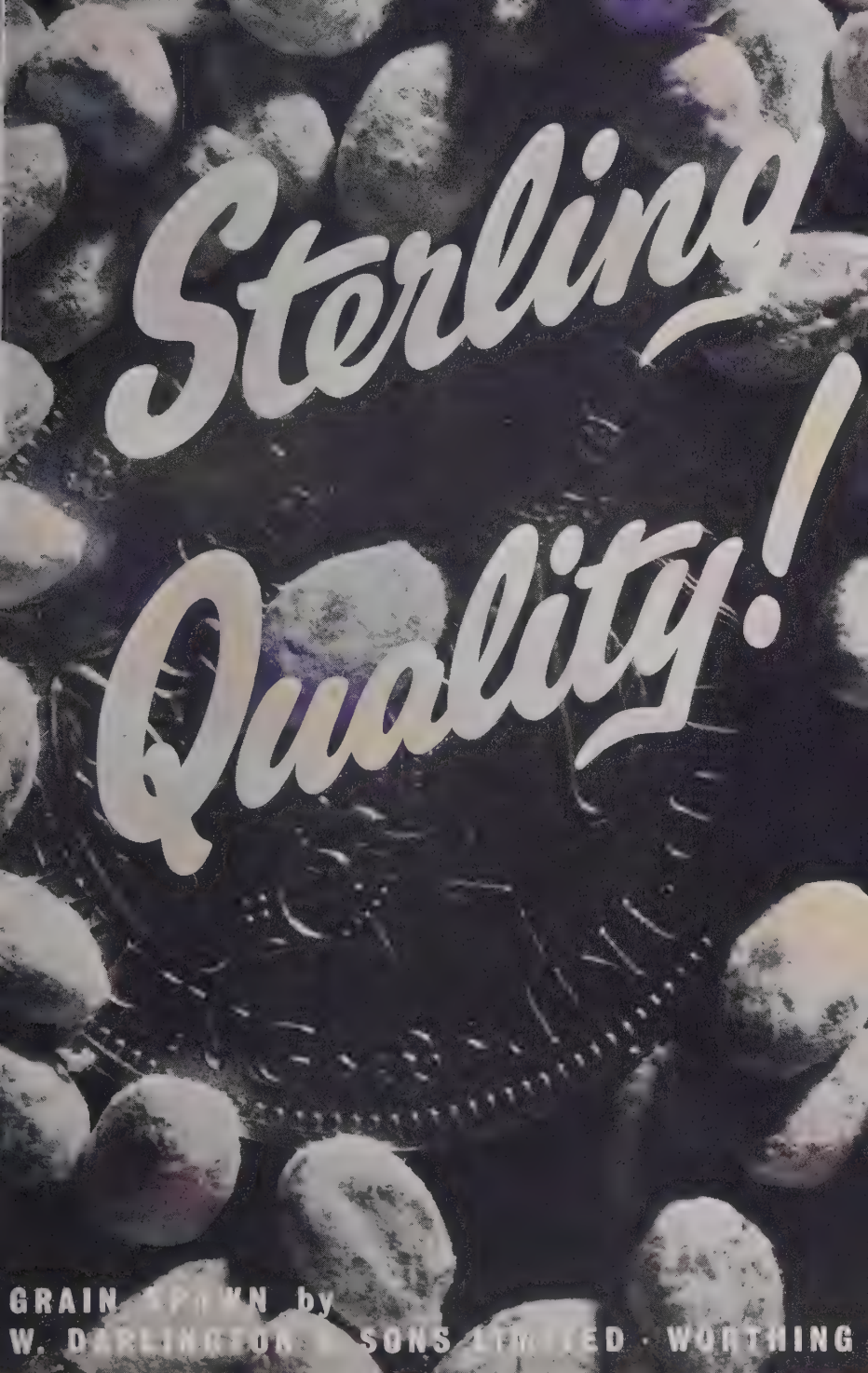
The stands of the 84 firms taking part occupied 25,000 sq. ft. of floor space. The organisation work was carried out by Brooks Publicity Services.

MUSHROOM GROWERS MEET

More than sixty mushroom growers attended a meeting at the Victoria and Station Hotel, Preston, Lancashire, on 28th October, organised by Mr. G. Hardwick of Northern Horticultural Supplies.

Mr. G. Culpin of The Murphy Chemical Co. Ltd., gave a brief outline on the control of pests and competing fungi and dealt also with methods of site and equipment sterilisation. Mr. W. A. Oakley of the Irish Peat Moss Co., gave an interesting description of the finer points of peat production and went on to give varying figures regarding the absorption of moisture and the best methods of casing with peat; and watering problems. After refreshments Mr. G. Dobbin of Pinkerton's, Glasgow, answered many questions on mushroom growing in general and spoke of inevitable disagreements on various points. Referring in particular to some production records published in the November *MGA Bulletin* he said, "Some mushroom growers are on par with fishermen when referring to their catch" (laughter). Mr. V. L. Barrow of Shirley Organics Ltd., dealt with composting by analysis and was listened to with considerable interest, he too answering a number of questions.

Thanks to Mr. Hardwick were proposed by Mr. F. Bleazard of Blackpool, former MGA Chairman and a member of the MGA Executive. Mr. Bleazard said the attendance at the meeting certainly called for another such gathering in the not too distant future.



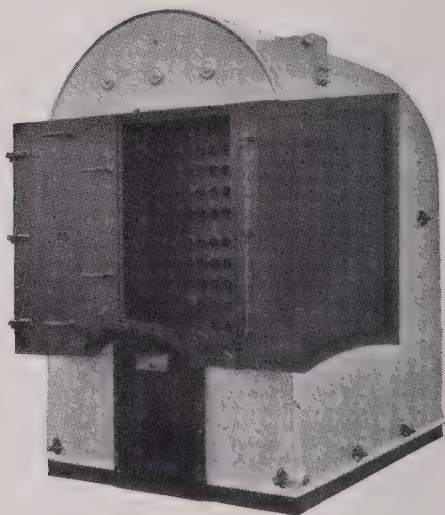
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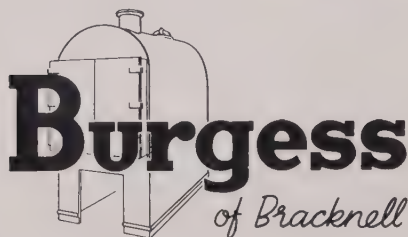
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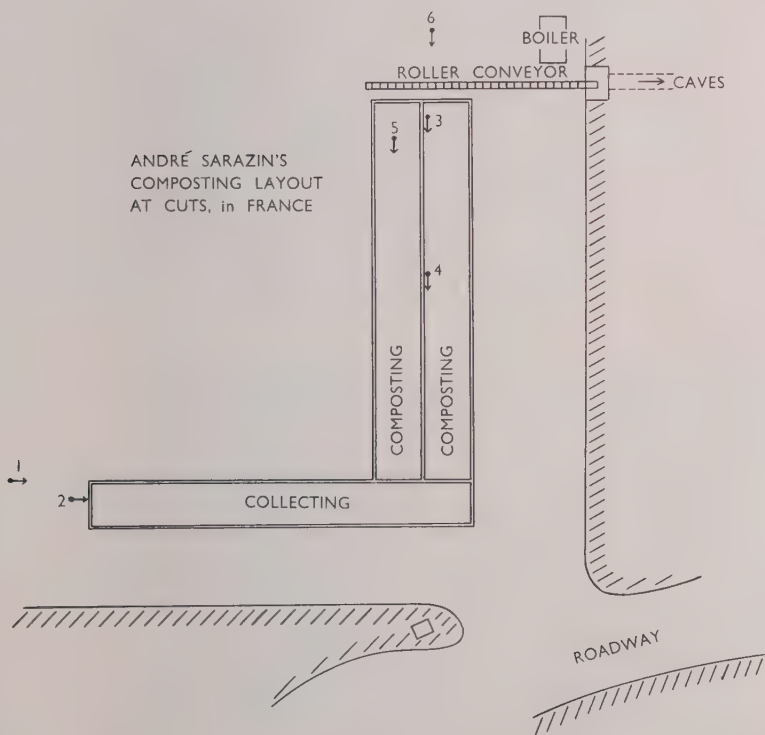
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HANDLING COMPOST

One of the highlights of the European tour of several MGA members last summer, was the visit to the extensive mushroom growing establishment of M. André Sarazin at Cuts in France where, in vast caves, mushroom production takes place on trays.

Of particular interest was M. Sarazin's method of the mechanical handling of compost which is carried out in a series of three huge concrete tanks, on the side walls of which mechanical grabs and composters run on rails.

Photographs of the composting yard and machines have now come to hand through the good offices of M. Sarazin and via M. Guy de Man. The plan was prepared by Mr. Fred. C. Atkins.





The initial reception tank with the grab at the far end and a heap of stable manure on the right-hand side. Note the rails on top of the walls. The other two tanks are at right angles at the far end.

The grab at work.



The twin tanks where composting starts in the open air and finishes up under cover. The rails are clearly visible in the centre and a grab and a composter are at work at the far end (right).

A close-up of the grab and composter at work under cover.



The compost is stacked on raised floor slats to allow free air movement under the stack.

Roller conveyors are used to transport the trays from the composting yard to the caves.





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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION SECRETARY

Miss Doreen G. Gandy

Miss Doreen G. Gandy has been appointed to succeed Dr. Pieter J. Bels of Holland, as Hon. Secretary of the International Commission on Mushroom Science which, incidentally, is now affiliated to the International Society of Horticultural Science. Dr. Bels has had to resign, through pressure of work at the Horst Research Station, the post he accepted on the occasion of the Paris Conference. Miss Gandy, of course, was the Yaxley Research Station's mycologist until the MRA staff was transferred to the Glasshouse Crops Research Station at Littlehampton, in 1955, where she is now working on the La France complex and Yellow Moulds. The President of the International Commission is C. Riber Rasmussen, of Denmark, and the Hon. Secretary for the 1962 Congress in Philadelphia, U.S.A., is Dr. Leon R. Kneebone.

A NOTE ON MASSED PINHEADS

From an "Elder Member"

Having heard the discussion and the Brains Trust Panel's comments on the trouble with Massed Pinheads experienced by Mr. Raymond Thompson and others, some thoughts come to mind which are offered in the best spirit of the Association—a spirit which was obviously not lacking at Weston—as a contribution to the Mutual Aid for which the Association is renowned.

First one might give Mr. Thompson some fatherly advice about when to count chickens, and suggest that before doing so again he should consult Mr. Duthy.

Then there was clearly a benefit, with greatly reduced incidence of the trouble, from the use of a poorer compost. From notes which have appeared in the Bulletin from time to time, it appears that Mr. Stanley Middlebrook has during the last few years had unrivalled experience on this subject, and he might be willing to give the benefit of his advice to sufferers from Massed Pinheads wishing to spoil their composts.

It seems possible also that Mr. Middlebrook has found a solution of a different kind by transferring any abortive surplus Pinheads from his beds to paper, and sending them to the Editor of the Bulletin. The possibility that they may thereafter trouble others is, of course, a minor consideration. Mr. Thompson and other sufferers from this trouble (i.e., their own Massed Pinheads, not Mr. Middlebrook's) might find some relief if they, like Mr. Middlebrook, were to transfer some of the surplus vigour from their beds to their pens, and send the result to the Editor.

EDITORS NOTE: It is understood that Mr. Thompson has now cured his trouble—by increased air movement and, maybe, by the advice contained herewith.

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Secondly, you have greater assurance that your crop will be free of pests and disease. The higher temperature either kills off the pests inside the heap or drives them to the surface, where they can be dealt with by insecticides. High temperatures during fermentation are particularly vital in preventing disease such as Vert-de-gris, of which there is special danger when composting during the winter months.

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ANALYSIS OF COMPOSTS

It has been fairly common practice of growers in the U.S.A. for several years to have their composts analysed as a guide to the use of supplements, mainly to supply extra nitrogen; some British growers also have been doing this but it is not yet a very common practice.

The Executive Committee of the MGA considers this a useful development, and is investigating the possibility of appointing an official Consulting Analyst to the Association. The analyst appointed would be someone with a consulting analytical practice already running, who would undertake to analyse members' samples for nitrogen and moisture on the day of arrival, and give the result in that evening's post, or by telephone if previously arranged. The fee would probably be between 30/- and £2 per sample. Directions for sampling, packing, etc., would be arranged between the MGA and the analyst, but the sample required would be between 2lb. and 7lb. of wet compost and would be sent in a polythene bag, probably in an outer carton.

It is not quite certain yet whether it is practicable for all growers to sample and have the result in time to supplement each stack on the basis of its own nitrogen content. For growers using a very short composting period there is not much time for the added nitrogen to be assimilated in the compost.

Sampling raw manure as it comes off a lorry is a very difficult and unreliable process. Unless the manure is well mixed before the "official" stacking, the first turn is the earliest time at which a representative sample can be obtained. This subject, and also the late addition of nitrogen supplements are being studied and there may be developments which will improve the prospects of directly controlled nitrogen supplementation.

Meanwhile it seems probable that many growers could be helped in deciding how much supplement to add, and in their control of compost moisture, if they had a series of analyses done on their own composts at filling. In order to make mutually satisfactory arrangements with an analyst, the Secretary would like to hear from members :

1. Whether they would like to use this analytical service when it starts.
2. How many samples per week, or at whatever longer interval, they would expect to send.

Members can of course send as many samples as often as they like, at the same fee per sample, but the analyst would wish to know at the start whether to expect 10 or 100 or more samples per week.

The Secretary will also be pleased to have any other comments on the scheme.

R.L.E.

GOING SKI-ING?

If any MGA member is contemplating a ski-ing holiday in Switzerland from the middle of February to the beginning of March, Major A. L. A. Dredge of Coombe Bank Market Gardens, Sundridge, Sevenoaks, Kent, will be the Ski Club of Great Britain's representative at Champre , Valais, during that period and will be pleased to give any MGA members assistance. Major Dredge writes: " This is an inexpensive and attractive French-speaking village with ski-ing facilities suitable for beginners ". Major Dredge adds that there will be an opportunity on 5th or 6th March, to visit the mushroom farm of Parmentier et Cie at Geneva. Incidentally Major Dredge's daughter Tessa, who was 3rd in the Ladies' Downhill Junior Ski-ing Championship last year, has been selected to train with the British Ladies' team during the coming season and left for St. Anton on 29th November.

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REVIEW OF WESTON.

by F.P. (BELFAST).



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UNDER, RATHER THAN ABOUT,
THE WEATHER.



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AND SPAWNS
GAVE RISE TO LOTS OF NODS AND
YAWNS.



OUR LADY FOLK DID RAMP AND
RAVE
ABOUT THE BEAUTY OF COX'S CAVE.



BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
THOSE GROWER JUDGES
INSPECTED CHIPS FOR MARKS
AND SMUDGES.



A GROWER'S SON BENT ON ROMANCE
MET SCIENTIST'S DAUGHTER AT
THE DANCE.

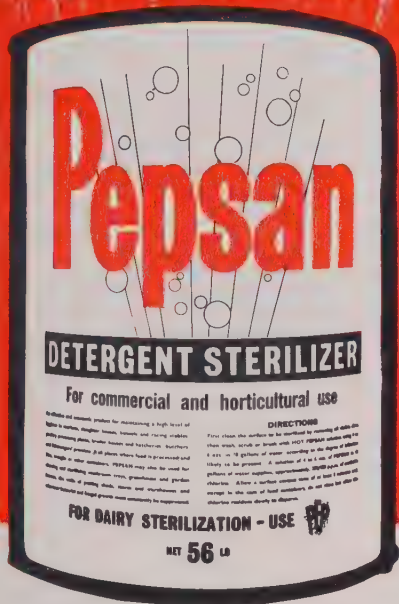


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THE EFFECT OF SULPHUR DIOXIDE ON GROWING MUSHROOMS

By R. L. Edwards

In connection with a claim that mushroom crops had been damaged by sulphur dioxide vapour, a rather simple experiment was carried out to test the effect of sulphur dioxide on growing mushrooms. Three sections of bed with growing mushrooms were carefully removed from a cropping house and placed in small boxes under larger inverted boxes on a concrete floor, so that there would be a slow exchange of air, but no draught over the bed surface. In two of the chambers thus made, were placed bowls containing solutions of sodium thiosulphate ("hypo") with dilute acid. These solutions would slowly give off sulphur dioxide vapour, which could be detected by smell. After four hours, when the covers were removed from the boxes, sulphur dioxide was detectable by smell over the growing mushrooms. At that time there was no apparent effect on the mushrooms and the covers were replaced. After 16 hours exposure all the mushrooms in the sulphur dioxide chambers had developed a pale lemon yellow colour, but no other visible abnormality.

It was not possible to determine the concentration of sulphur dioxide to which the mushrooms were exposed, but from the known limit of detection by smell (1 part per million) the concentration was probably between one and ten p.p.m., decreasing after some hours as the generating solution became exhausted.

The mushrooms in the chamber not receiving sulphur dioxide remained white.

The mushrooms were then removed from the chamber and kept for a further two days, during which the yellow colour on the caps very slowly darkened to a golden brown colour. The lemon yellow shade still persisted in some places round the edge of the caps. During exposure to sulphur dioxide and afterwards the mushrooms which were at the appropriate stage of development, opened normally, exposing gills of normal form and colour as far as this could be judged without microscopic examination.

At no stage during the experiment had the treated mushrooms any resemblance to any of the known fungus or bacterial diseases of the cultivated mushroom.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

At the November meeting of the MGA Executive Committee, presided over by Mr. P. B. Stanley-Evans, it was reported that the Oil Scheme continued to be well supported although there were instances of members who used the MGA scheme only as a lever to obtain reduced prices from their own suppliers. This action was deplored by the Committee.

The protracted negotiations with the Ministry of Agriculture on the matter of Fertiliser Subsidies was again the subject of a report and it was stated that, as a result of the representations made, mushroom growers could expect favourable news within the next month or so.

A record membership of 712 all fully paid was reported by the Secretary. There was an increase of 16 Grower Members. Mr. F. L. Filmer (Hon. Treas.) announced a satisfactory financial position.

It was agreed that all Grower Members should have an opportunity of joining a scheme whereby a 24 hour compost analysis service was made available to those wishing to join at an agreed fee (see page 483 of this issue).

PUBLICITY PROPOSALS. Proposals by the Publicity Committee for the expenditure of £11,630 on Publicity during the coming year were approved by the Executive Committee after discussion. These proposals were explained by the Publicity Committee Chairman, Mr. G. V. Allen.

ALDRIN—A WARNING

Because insufficient information is available on Aldrin—its base and its carry over effect—the MGA Executive Committee agreed at its November meeting to warn members against its use.

MEMBERSHIP

Members are asked to inform the Secretary of the names and addresses of any mushroom growers who are not MGA members. An effort will then be made to persuade non-members to join.

NEW PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

Following the resignation of Miss Valerie Baker as Public Relations Officer to the MGA (it is hoped that her services, in an advisory capacity, will become available at a later date) Miss Rachel Owen has been appointed to the vacancy from 75 applicants. Miss Owen, who is 24, is a B.A. of Durham University, where she studied politics and economics.

THE DR. TSCHIERPE ARTICLES

Owing to a misunderstanding the final instalments of Dr. Tschierpe's "Studies on the Influence of Carbon Dioxide on the Cultivated Mushroom" are not available for this issue but it is hoped to include the last but one in the next issue.

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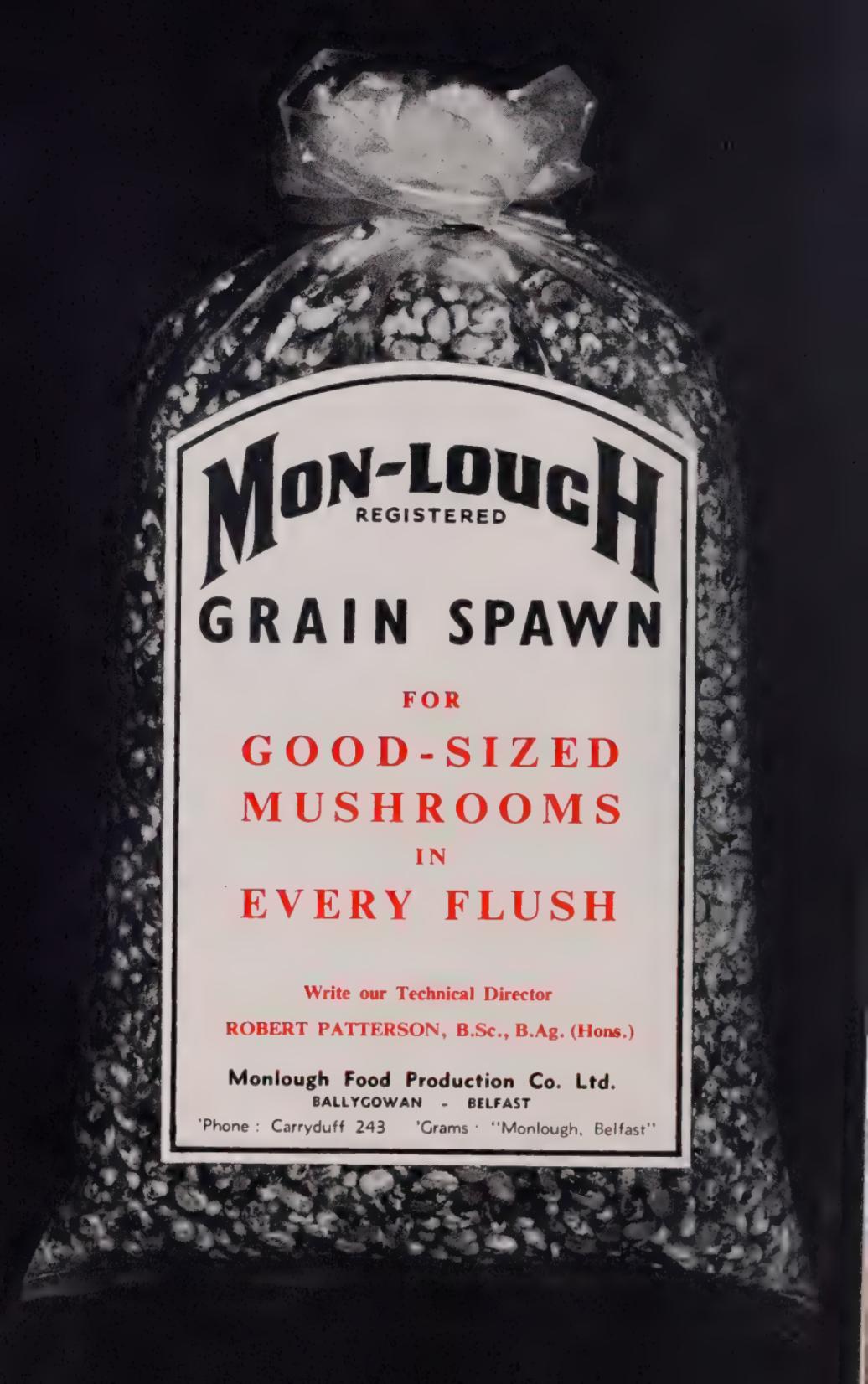
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250. It's odd when you come to think of it. There's probably more nonsense *talked* about mushrooms—by growers, scientists, gossiping salesmen, and so on—than about anything else. And yet there's perhaps *less* nonsense *written* about them than anything else. Why is this? Is it that the superficial, pseudo-cocksure confidence of conversation is a facade, a cloak for the naked ignorance most of us feel when we try to commit our unwarranted statements to print? The fact that Pinheads are so rarely criticised *in print* (a) supports the above observation and (b) must be eminently satisfactory to those who rely solely on this column for instruction, help, advice and hope!

251. Reported on T.V's Panorama was the fact of a £70,000,000 turnover annually in Ladies' Hairdressing. Gone must be the old adage "Where there's muck there's money" for we dung-pluggers manage only about £5,000,000 at most. Scents Pay!

252. At an Hotel Splendide I ordered chicken and mushroom sauce. The sauce didn't arrive. I created. No one knew it was on the Menu. As the last chicken bone was finally skinned the "sauce" arrived—a simple, cool consommé, with two or three crumbs of freshly chopped stalk floating, cork-like, on the top. How would our epicurean friend at Chichester have reacted?

253. According to the recent survey it would seem that the consumption of mushrooms is under $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. per head per annum. A broiler man tells me their figure is one broiler per head per annum. There would seem to be a vast scope for both, although it appears broilers will reach saturation in five years (whatever that means). When do mushrooms reach saturation—or have they reached it already? The scope, which on the face of it seems enormous, may in fact be an illusion. The public is better fed than ever, nobody goes hungry, and you can't thrust even an extra $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of mushrooms per annum down an already satiated throat. Try to cram an extra half broiler down as well and you'll have a boom in the undertaking industry.

254. The battle for higher output and consumption isn't between us and the broiler men. But if it were, they have something of a start on us. I have it on good authority that the banks and credit people almost fall over themselves to shower easy loans on the broiler industry. But while the broiler people and the banks freely admit a lower profitability with broilers than mushrooms, the mean and humble fungus is regarded by credit houses with a good deal of distaste. Perhaps that's the answer—distaste. If your bank manager doesn't like mushrooms, you've had it!

255. If more mushrooms are to be sold, space must be made available for them in the public stomach—something must be left out. Presumably some other vegetable or garnishing. We've got to advertise the advantages of mushrooms over other commodities. I suggest we plug three

important points—no peeling, no waste, no time (to cook). What are we doing about that? Nothing. There'll come a time, gents, when we *have* to spend more than our current £8,000 a year on advertising. Shouldn't we look forward *now*, and set about providing the £100,000 annually that may well be the minimum required to keep us in business? Perhaps we should spend as much on publicity as we spend on spawn. You don't think so? (Shoot the man down! He's a fool!) Don't say I haven't warned you.

256. Call from Newcastle : "*Forget us today. London prices down to 2/-. Coming up here at 2/-.*" And this in late November—three weeks before prices should fall for the Christmas recess (by the standards of all previous years). It coincides with the gleeful Press announcements of a coming slump.

257. I recently twitted our scientists for hanging on to sciarid investigations too long after this fly had ceased to pester us. The laugh's on me, and I apologise to these noble men. We're just getting over a nasty attack of what seems to be a larger sciarid than we used to enjoy. Those early ones produced maggots in mushrooms from the beginning of the crop onwards. These larger ones have only produced maggots in mushrooms that have been left standing in houses prematurely closed down because of the spread (by the flies?) of blotch. An interesting point is that of two houses side by side, at virtually the same stage, one was chock full of sciarids and even the end wall was covered—outside. The other house had very few inside and none outside. In fact on the outside walls the flies stopped dead at the point where the houses joined!

258. *Hotelier* : Whatever name an hotel gives a soup you can be pretty certain it's all the same.

S.M. : But if you make your soup with genuine mushrooms you know the difference at once.

Hotelier : Yes, but who bothers to do that now?

259. A lot of trouble lately with growth coming up to the peat surface in the normal way then vanishing at the first dose of water, never to reach the surface again ; pinheading taking place about half an inch down, and many being killed by water which cannot evaporate from so far down.

260. Summarizing the difference between the apparently extravagant luxury-loving, free-spending Surrey/Sussex Southerners and the tight, ca'canny, utilitarian Yorkshire/Lancashire Northerners, a Sussex friend tells me, "The Northerner is conscious of money in the bank ; The Southerner is conscious of money *out* of the bank."

261. *S.M.* : Tell me, Doc, would you say pH readings are an invaluable aid to compost preparation?

Dr. Fuller-Wisdom pH.D. (Fungology) Could be.

S.M. : Would you go further and agree that in fact pH tests are a worthless waste of time?

Dr. Fuller-Wisdom pH.D. (Fungology) : May be.

S.M. : " Could be." " May be." Will you clarify the position? Could pH be a nebulous unknown, leading us up the garden? Has the symbol any significant meaning?

Dr. Fuller-Wisdom pH.D. (Fungology) : pH? *perHaps*.

CORRESPONDENCE

My reply to Stanley Middlebrook's Pinhead occasioned such a deluge of fake premises on his part that I can only conclude that he is suffering from a Pique-heat.

There is little use in replying to statements not made by me, but I would suggest that a little attention might be afforded to the one I did make:

How is it that Stanley Middlebrook has raised his output from poor ($1\frac{1}{2}$ lb.) to good ($2\frac{1}{2}$ lb.), an accomplishment he considers difficult, and yet is unable to raise his $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. to $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. plus, which he says is much easier?

In fact he tells us the reverse is happening.

M. C. LUXMOORE



Calypso

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This century, when seven years old,
Began her treasures to unfold
By Providence decreeing the birth in Suffolk
Of one destined for Sacrificial yoke;
And destined, too, through his Christian Name
To be afire with Churchillian flame
As news flashed in that instant hour—
The press announcing: Alderton, Winston R.
At school he excelled in defending the wicket,
(Has, ever since, been playing good 'cricket')
In Essex in journalism, his natural 'bent',
He vied with Atkins wherever he went,
Until, alas, the onslaught of war
Takes him abroad, active with Radar.
This young Prince Charming at one stage in life
Took unto himself a charming young wife:
Reviewing *her* recipes—Bulletin, Forty-five—
It's now no mystery *he* keeps so alive!
Ardent MGA Secretary for seven years,
And, throughout Europe, wherever he appears
On mushroom occasions, always respected
With wit, humour and pipe projected;
I'm sure that each mushroom-fellow-competitor
Joins me in wishing our Bulletin Editor,
Lover of pheasant in line with his sights,
All good things his, within his rights,
And, drink a toast, undiluted with water,
To him, his wife, their son and daughter.

F.P. (Belfast)

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TO DATE

Names in italics are of Associate Members.

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A. DeB. Hovell (1949-50)	G. V. Allen (1957-8)
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Conserverie du Clos du Verdet, 86 Rue du 20 ème Chas., Verdet, (Loir & Cher).
Desnoues, Yves, La Tour de Salvagny, Rhône.
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Guiochon, P., Mesnil-le-Roy, (S. et O.).
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Loyant, Michel, Longué, (M. et L.).
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Mouton, G., Exploitation de Castelculier, B.P.1 Lafox, Lot-et-Garonne.
Nail et Fils, Chançay, (Indre et Loire).
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- Abel, Wilhelm, Katzenstein (Harz), Ober Osterode (Harz).
Baumann, Joseph, Champignonsucht, Lipburg b. Badenwelier, Offenburg i. Bd.
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Frankenthaler Champignon-Kulturen, Frankenthaler, Zuckerfabrik-Strasse 3, Postfach 181.
Greve, Wolfgang, Hambuehren, C'elle, Nr. Hannover.
Hullen, Erich, Erlangen.
Hunte, W., Epi, Hannover Linden, Postfach 144.
Jaeger Wilhelm & Sohn, Malente-Gremsmuhlen, Eutiner Strasse 27, Holst.
Kendermann, Hermann, Wiesbaden, Webergasse 7.
Kuhne, Carl, K.G., Hamburg-Altona, Schutzenstr. 38.
Ley, Erpeler, Champignon-Zucht, G.n.b.H., Erpel a Rhein, Koln-Lindenthal, Wildenburgstr. 28.
Max Planck Institut Für Zuchtungsforshung, Abt. F. Kulturpflanzenzuchtung, Hamburg-Volksdorf, Waldredder 4.
Mende, Alfred, Champignon-Kulturen, Berlin-Britz, Mariendorfer Allee 70/72.
Minnigerode, Baronesse von, Gutsverwaltung Gieboldehausen, (206), Gieboldehausen.
Nees, Rolfe Herrn., Gurkenkonserven -Fabrik, Hochstetten in Baden, Fernruf Linkenheim 242.
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Huntington, J. R., Rockbourne, Nr. Fordingbridge.
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Lawrence, Capt. G. P., Barrow Hill, Goodworth Clatford, Andover.
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New Forest Produce Ltd., Firtree View, Canada Common, West Wellow.
Stickland, D. G. Greenaway Nurseries, Warsash.
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Walden, R., 7 Richmond Gardens, Southampton.
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Deisseroth, R. H., 671 Old Mokapu Road, Kailua, Oahu, T. Hawaii.

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Godfrey, P. F., Wanatchee Products, Much Birch, Hereford.

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NORFOLK

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Marston, J. S., High London Farm, Shelfanger, Diss.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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Noble, B. A., Noble Mushrooms Ltd., Yaxley, Peterborough.

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Cwynar, S., Mushroom Farm, Bestwood Park, Nottingham.
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Gryzan, L., 58 Musters Road, West Bridgford.
Kavell, W. L., Kavell's Mushroom Farm, Orston.
Kublicki, S., Old Estate House, Wollaton, Nottingham.
Lichtarowicz, Col. L., Mapperley Mushroom Farm, 7 Mapperley Park Drive, Nottingham.
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Nason F. R. Ltd., Avenue "B," Wholesale Market, Nottingham.
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Dunning-White, P. W., Westerhall Langholm, Dumfriesshire.
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Knaust, Henry Jnr., Knaust Mushrooms Inc., Vallmeyer, Illinois.
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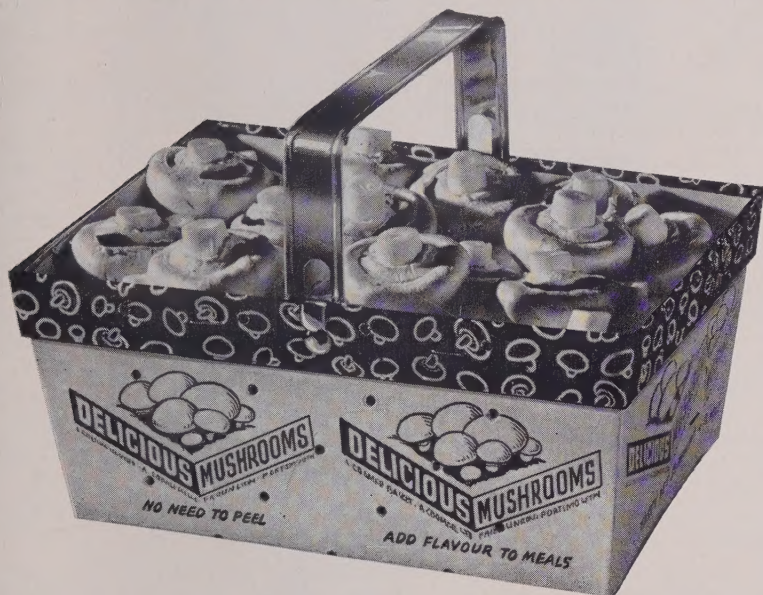
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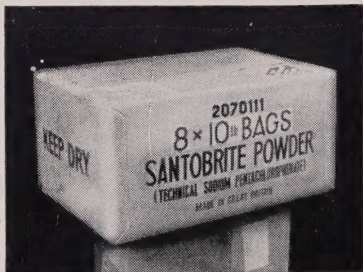
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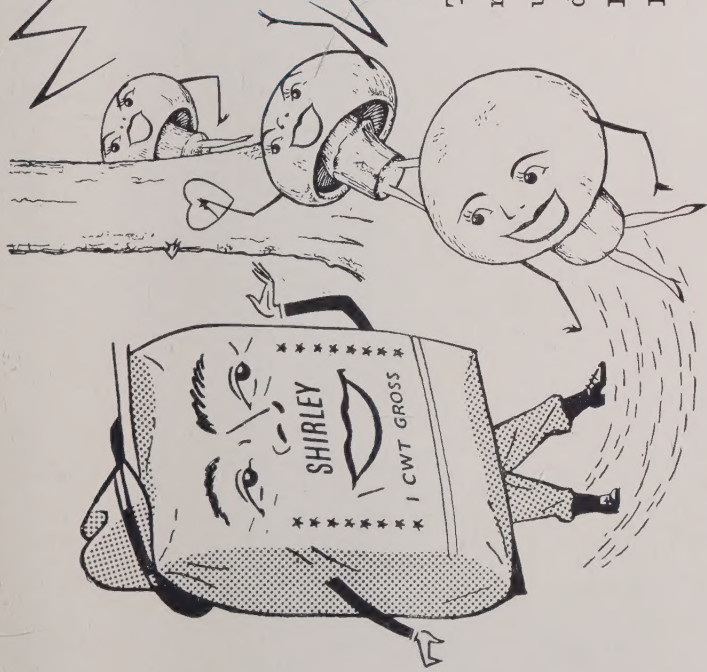
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